



FOUNDATION FOR FAIR CONTRACTING
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TESTIMONY of
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Executive Director

SB 81 AN ACT CONCERNING JOURNEYMEN AND APPRENTICES

February 17, 2015

Honorable Senator Winfield, Honorable Representative Tercyak, and esteemed members of the Labor Committee:

The Foundation for Fair Contracting of Connecticut ("FFC") submits this testimony in opposition to Raised Bill 81 AN ACT CONCERNING JOURNEYMEN AND APPRENTICES.

My name is Cindy Dubuque and I am the executive director of the Foundation for Fair Contracting of Connecticut. The FFC-CT is an industry-sponsored organization. Our mission is to promote compliance with laws and regulations relating to public works construction. Specifically, we focus on issues concerning wages, classification of workers and apprenticeship standards.

Apprenticeship programs are structured and designed to be equivalent to that of a four year undergraduate degree, which provides opportunity for graduation, certification and status as a journey-person. According to U.S Department of Labor, there are 5,175 active apprentices, 2,236 new apprentices and 938 apprentices who have completed their program in the state of Connecticut during the 2014 fiscal year. There are currently 1,504 active apprenticeship programs. While many men and women sign up for these programs, not all successfully complete or graduate from the program. These programs are rigorous and are designed to educate and create a highly skilled and trained workforce.

While some may argue that increasing the apprenticeship ratios will create new job opportunities, we contend that this increase is a guise for maintaining a cheaper pool of labor which keeps jobs away from skilled workers. Much like employers utilizing unpaid or low paid interns to provide labor that would otherwise be done by educated and trained professionals, increasing the apprenticeship ratio is a means of lowering costs in a way that harms professionals.

Apprentices, just like interns, are learning their craft or trade and need to have support and guidance. With a one to five ratio, apprentices are susceptible to injury or greater harm. Safety is a paramount concern in the construction industry and we must not sacrifice the health and wellbeing of our future workforce. Instead, we must continue to focus on graduating those who enter into these apprenticeship programs and providing them with sustainable job opportunities upon their graduation.